



# Mid-America Theatre Conference

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 18

Number 1

October 1996

Dear Colleagues:

Let me begin this first MATC Newsletter of our 18th year by thanking all of those of you who so generously responded to our reminder that you update your MATC memberships. Thanks to you, MATC is again solvent, and we will be able to continue operations this year.

However, the continued health of MATC means that we must do everything we can to ensure maximum participation in our 18th MATC Convention, March 13-16, 1997. The fact that this year's conference should be one of the most exciting in years should certainly help us achieve our goals.

First, the location. Responding to membership comment after last year's convention in Arlington Heights, Illinois, we decided to keep the conference not only in the Chicago area for 1997, but in Chicago itself. Hard work by **David Krasner**, Southern Illinois University, resulted in our choosing **The Bismarck Hotel** in downtown Chicago. The hotel rates are competitive, and the location is great.

This year's Theatre History Symposium topic -- "What Makes Theatre Popular" -- is being echoed by the Directing Symposium and Theater for Youth. In addition, we will be continuing our program of student auditions and related Production Workshops. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find all the details for submitting papers and proposals for these programs. **Sarah Blackstone**, Southern Illinois University, is running the Theatre History Symposium, while MATC Vice-President (and President Elect!) **Lynn-Steven Johanson** and **Elga Hassan**, Western Illinois University, are co-chairing the Directing Symposium and **Odai Johnson**, Southwest Missouri State University is coordinating the Production Workshops. **Rhona Justice-Malloy**, Central Michigan University, is heading up Theater for Youth. Our popular Young Scholars' Symposium is being conducted by **Jonathan Chambers**, St. Lawrence University.

**Please help MATC get a good response to this year's Conference by duplicating and distributing the information in this Newsletter. Make sure that all your colleagues who have any interest in Popular Theatre or Popular Culture, whether in your department or not, receive a copy of the call for papers and the registration form. Make sure that all your students have access to the acting audition/tech & design interview information and registration forms. Consider requiring your best undergraduate and graduate students to submit a paper to the Young Scholars' Symposium. In other words, SPREAD THE WORD, and we'll have the biggest and best MATC Conference yet.**

## ! ! Coming Attractions ! !

The Conference Keynote Speaker will be **Professor Brooks McNamara**, a well-known authority in the area of popular theatre/popular entertainment. He is a Professor in the Department of Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, and Director of the Shubert Archive in New York. Professor McNamara is also the author of numerous works on popular Theatre, including a new and expanded edition of *Step Right Up*, published by the University of Mississippi Press. Other works include *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*, *The Shuberts of Broadway*, and *American Popular Entertainments*. He will address the Conference on "Defining Popular Entertainment."

**Professor Richard Poole**, Briar Cliffe College, Sioux City, IA, assisted by faculty and students of Briar Cliffe, will be presenting his production of *The Medicine Show of the Great Dr. Balthazar T. Archimedes Presents!* as our post-Banquet entertainment. Professor Poole's Medicine Show is well-known throughout the Midwest, and his performance for MATC promises to be an entertaining and instructive, not to mention hilarious, show. One guarantee: there'll be nothing like it anywhere else in Chicago!

And by the time the preliminary Conference program is distributed in February, you can be sure that even more exotic attractions will be added for your delight and edification.

See you in Chicago in March!

George Glenn, President, MATC

# MID-AMERICA THEATRE CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

## Theatre History Symposium 1997

"Theatre and Its Audience: What Makes Theatre Popular?"

As the Congress works to balance the budget, public funding for the Arts could very well become a thing of the past. As the theatre is asked to "pay for itself" it is time that we examine the various ways that audiences might be attracted to our productions, and ways in which we might make our art more accessible to a wider range of tastes.

In 1997, the Theatre History Symposium invited proposals on such topics as:

- all forms of theatrical popular entertainment -- contemporary and historic
- the commercial success but critical failure of performers, plays, or theatres (and, of course, *vice versa*)
- examination of how we define theatre and what we choose to exclude from this category
- the creation of myth and/or national identity through theatrical events
- the ways in which audiences receive meaning and the ways in which we project meaning from the stage
- the control of plays and productions by authors or other authorities
- censorship in its many forms
- the economics of the theatre
- the impact of violence on audiences
- the ethics of production choices for actors and audiences

Papers will be delivered oral presentations of fifteen to twenty minutes and speakers should write with these limitations in mind. Please include a request for any needed audio-visual equipment with your proposal. Note: MATC cannot supply equipment other than slide projectors and VHS players/monitors. Abstracts of papers should be sent to: **Sarah J. Blackstone, Department of Theatre--6608, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-6608**

**DEADLINE FOR PAPERS: 15 November 1996.**

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## Directing Symposium 1997

"Directing for a Contemporary Audience"

During rehearsals the director assumes the role of the ideal audience, assessing the work on the stage in terms of its communicative effectiveness. But who is this potential audience, and what is the symbiotic relationship between the director and the spectators? What challenges face a director whose audience has grown up with film, television and MTV?

In 1997 the Directing Symposium invites proposals on topics that may include but are not limited to the following:

● politics and social relevance	● classics for today's audience
● violence	● new plays
● creating seasons in a challenging market	● influence of film on play structure
● effects of computer games and MTV	● post-modernism and audience response
● audience development	● technology

Papers will be delivered in oral presentation of fifteen to twenty minutes and speakers should write with these limitations in mind. Please include a request for any audio-visual equipment with your proposal. Note: MATC cannot supply equipment other than slide projectors and VHS players/monitors. Deadline for proposals is 1 December, 1996. Send proposals to the MATC Directing Symposium Co-Chairs: **Elga Hassan and Lynn-Steven Johanson, Department of Theatre, Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL 61455. Phone: (309) 298-111543; Fax: (309) 298-2695; E-Mail: EB\_Hassan@wiu.edu**

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## Theater for Youth 1997

"Theatre 'Games' -- Inter/Intra-Active Performance for Youth"

As we move toward the twenty-first century we are moving away from a cultural preference for neatly "framed"

performance events. As unsettling as this may be to many adults, today's youth are developing their own cultural preferences for inter-active performance where the audience members act as editors or "locked" events such as structured improvisation and participatory storytelling as well as intra-active performance where the audience members may effect completely unpredictable changes in the structure of the event itself as in CD\_Rom games like DOOM and MARATHON.

The Theater for Youth Symposium invites proposals on any aspect of inter- or intra-active performance for young people. The focus will be on the developing preference of children for inter/intra-active events and how that preference may shape theatre practice in the future. Papers might consider the emerging or traditional inter-intra-active nature of any form of performance or entertainment arts such as street fairs, renaissance festivals, improvisation, storytelling, games, theatre, electronic games and CD-Rom games as well as inter-intra-active film, television, or holography.

Papers will be delivered in oral presentations of fifteen to twenty minutes and speakers should write with these limitations in mind. **Please include a request for any needed audio-visual equipment with your proposal. Note: MATC cannot supply equipment other than slide projectors and VHS players/monitors.** Deadline for proposals is 15 November, 1996. Abstracts of papers or presentations should be sent to: Rhona Justice-Malloy, Department of Speech Communication and Dramatic Arts, 333 Moore Hall, MI 48859. Phone: (704) 526-9443; E-Mail: 3icw6tx@chuvm.csv.cmich.edu

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## Production Workshops 1997

We are seeking workshops which will provide educational experiences for students auditioning at the conference. Workshop length: 1 hour, 15 minutes. **Include any audio-visual needs. Note: MATC cannot supply equipment other than slide projectors and VHS players/monitors.** Submit a one-page description of the workshop and a one-paragraph description for program copy before December 1, 1995 to Odai Johnson, Department of Theatre, Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, MO 65004. Phone: (417) 836-5201; Fax: (417) 836-6940; E-Mail: doj314f@vma.smsu.edu

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## Young Scholars' Symposium 1997

This a debut panel, with submission open to any currently-enrolled undergraduate or graduate student who has never presented at a regional or national conference. Fifteen- to twenty-minute (8-10-pages) papers on any theatre-related topic will be considered. Essays can address theatre history, performance theory, theatre design and technology, and/or theatre pedagogy. Submissions must be accompanied by a nominating letter from a faculty member at the student's institution. **Please include a request for any audio-visual equipment with your paper. Note: MATC cannot supply equipment other than slide projectors and VHS players/monitors.**

Send proposals before 15 January, 1997 to Jonathan Chambers, Dept. of Speech and Theatre, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY 13617; (315) 379-5143; E-Mail: jcha@music.stlawu.edu.

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## Auditions and Interviews 1997

Continuing a long tradition, MATC will be hosting auditions and interviews for student performers, designers and technicians seeking summer or seasonal employment. We anticipate a large number of students to audition. Actor auditions will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, March 14 and 15. Dance auditions will be held on those two days from approximately 5:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Technical/Design interviews will be held Sunday, March 16, from 9:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. **Registrations must be postmarked by 1 February, 1996.** For registration forms and additional information, contact Noreen Barnes-McLain, Secretary, MATC, Department of Theatre, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, IL 62901-6608, or George D. Glenn, President, MATC, Department of Theatre, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614.

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! ! Call For Papers ! !

For the 1997

# Mid-America Theatre Conference

March 13, 14, 15, 16, 1997

## "What Makes Theatre Popular?"

**See Inside for All the Exciting Details!**



George Glenn, President  
Mid-America Theatre Conference  
c/o Department of Theatre  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614

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JED DAVIS  
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Theater for Youth 1997

"Theatre Classes" - Interactive-Active Performance for Youth

As we move toward the year 2000, we are faced with many challenges. One of the most

660-646-2222

1-800-333-1111